

**00876**

**1962/10/29**

29 October 1962

[10/25/62]

EYES ONLY

## MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Mission to London

1. In the paragraphs below, there is a summary of my substantive activities while in London: at Annex A, a chronology of my activities from the time I arrived in the UK just before midnight, Sunday, 21 October, to my departure on Thursday morning, 25 October; and at Annex B, an account of the circumstances surrounding the release of the air photos on Cuba.

The Prime Minister

2. On Monday, 22 October, I accompanied the Ambassador to the Admiralty to assist him in briefing Mr. Macmillan on the situation in Cuba. The letter from the President had been sent to the Prime Minister's office earlier in the day. We delayed our session with the Prime Minister for half an hour, hoping to bring with us an advance draft of the President's message.

3. The Prime Minister was alone except for his Private Secretary. It was evident that the Prime Minister had some advance general knowledge of the developing situation in Cuba (as indeed he should have since we had briefed various members of the British intelligence community several days before in Washington). However, Mr. Macmillan obviously had no idea of the extent or precise nature of Soviet offensive capabilities in Cuba. His first reaction, which he addressed more to himself than to the Ambassador, was to the effect that the British people, who had been living in the shadow of annihilation for the past many years, had

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

CIA, J00 84-00499R

B/H/H5/HC 850A,

29 May 72

ST/Sm/209

4475

134F/2

somehow been able to live more or less normal lives and he felt that the Americans, now confronted with a similar situation would, after the initial shock, make a similar adjustment. "Life goes on somehow." He was obviously concerned that this observation might be misinterpreted, and went to considerable length to explain to the Ambassador that this was more of a philosophical commentary on human nature rather than any indication on his part that he was not sympathetic with the US position or shocked at the news.

4. After my recitation of the present Soviet offensive strength in Cuba, Mr. Macmillan said that, if the President were convinced that a meaningful offensive capability were present, that was good enough for him." He did not spend more than a few seconds on the photographs. Although the Prime Minister did not develop this theme in my presence in detail, he did indicate that he felt that a blockade would be difficult to enforce and that the US would have problems in getting solid UN support. He also ruminated about whether it would not have been better to have confronted Khrushchev privately with our evidence and given him a private ultimatum.

5. Lord Home then joined the Prime Minister and the Ambassador for a discussion of policy matters and I was excused. I was quickly followed by the Private Secretary who stressed the necessity for making our evidence as convincing as possible to the British public. He implied that the government <sup>would</sup> have a difficult time in giving us strong support, unless Parliament and the British people were convinced that the threat referred to by the President was genuine and unmitigable.

6. My further dealings with the Prime Minister and his office were confined to working on his speech to the House of Commons (delivered on Thursday, 25 October). On Wednesday afternoon, I edited part of the speech with the objective of making it as strong as possible in terms of evidence of a buildup, while keeping it within the bounds of information that could be released at that time. Just prior to leaving London, I worked on a revised draft with the Prime Minister's Private Secretary updating the information as of Thursday morning.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

"Declassified for Publication in  
Foreign Relations of the United States"

CA, J08 84-00499A  
BM, HS/HC 850A,  
29 May 72

20f11

CH-476

154F/3

Mr. Gaitskell and Mr. Brown

7. On Tuesday evening, I briefed Mr. Gaitskell and Mr. Brown. Also present at this session were Ambassador Bruce, Mr. Al Irving (First Secretary of the Embassy), Mr. Roosevelt [redacted] and myself. I spent approximately one and a half hours with Messrs. Gaitskell and Brown. Ambassador Bruce left for another appointment shortly after Mr. Gaitskell arrived. After my briefing and a discussion of the photographs, Mr. Gaitskell confessed that he had previously told Brown the President was confusing the issue of the Soviet buildup by making it appear that surface-to-air missiles were offensive weapons. He admitted that these suspicions were ill-founded and that the Soviets had clearly built up a significant medium and intermediate range missile capability in Cuba. He was visibly shaken. He made much of the analogy between Cuba and Turkey and brushed aside most of the standard arguments about the difference between the two. However, he seemed much impressed with the fact that the Cuban missiles were outside the BMEWS system. He felt that this did, in fact, represent a change in the status quo and in the "balance of terror" equation. Brown pressed hard on whether we had more or less missiles in Turkey than the Russians had in Cuba and whether the Russians could get early warning from our Turkish bases. I confessed ignorance on both of these questions, but promised that I would attempt to get the answers prior to the debate in Commons. Brown indicated, and Gaitskell assented, that if we did, indeed, have fewer missiles than the Russians, and if the Russians could get early warning, the argument about the equivalence of the Turkish and Cuban bases would be weakened.

8. Gaitskell said that he had seen with the Prime Minister just prior to our discussion and that the Prime Minister expressed annoyance about the lack of advance knowledge of US actions. I pointed out to Gaitskell in fairly strong terms that there were two aspects to the question of advanced knowledge: one was the developing situation in Cuba and the other was US intentions with respect to Cuba. In connection with the former, I told Gaitskell that we had occasion to discuss Cuba with several important people in the British intelligence community who happened to be in Washington during the week of 15 October, and that several of them had been given

"Declassified for Publication in  
Foreign Relations of the United States"

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

CA, JAB 84-00499R  
BM, HS/MC 850A,  
29 May 72

318-11

CM-477

a formal briefing on Friday, 19 October. We could only assume that they notified their government of the developing situation in Cuba. With respect to US intentions, I noted that we had hoped to get an advanced copy of the President's statement to the Prime Minister 12 hours before the broadcast, but that this was not possible because the President himself had not decided on the precise language of his statement until fairly late in the day. As a consequence, the Prime Minister had between eight and nine hours advance notice. This was unfortunate, but in the nature of the circumstances, was all that could have been done.

9. I had some time alone with George Brown after this session. Brown said that he was pleased that I "gave Gaitskell hell," saying that Gaitskell was being most difficult now that he "had the taste of office in his mouth." He said he had been thinking of resigning from the shadow cabinet because he was in such disagreement with Gaitskell. He implied that one had to take Gaitskell's reports of his conversations with Macmillan with a considerable amount of skepticism since Macmillan and Gaitskell had gotten to the point where they didn't trust each other, however, he said, Gaitskell's statement in Commons would be mild.

10. I had further contacts with Brown primarily in connection with the debate on Thursday afternoon. I passed on the information I received from Washington with respect to US missiles in Turkey and I also informed Gaitskell, through Brown, that the Prime Minister would, in his own address to Commons, indicate a more substantial Soviet offensive capability in Cuba than I had discussed in my briefing on Tuesday night. I was concerned lest Gaitskell would regard the Prime Minister's statement as an exaggeration of the missile ~~direct~~ threat and was anxious to emphasize that the Prime Minister was speaking from more recent evidence than I had at my disposal a day before.

#### The British Intelligence Community

11. After returning on Monday afternoon from our session with the Prime Minister, Ambassador Bruce and I agreed that it would be wise to brief the JIC as early as possible. Mr. Roosevelt got in touch with Sir Hugh Stephenson, Chairman

**BEST COPY AVAILABLE**

CIA, JOB 84-00499A

Box 1 HS/AC 850A,

29 May 72

42

Ch-476

154F/S

of the British JIC, and indicated that we would be prepared to brief the JIC either that afternoon or 10 o'clock the following morning. Sir Hugh felt that it would be better to have a special meeting of the JIC after the President's speech rather than before, and suggested 10 o'clock on Tuesday morning. We then got in touch with Sir Dick White, Head of the MI-6 and indicated that, since we had already given Sir Hugh and General Strong (Director of the JIB) a briefing in Washington, he might wish to have a similar briefing in advance of the JIC meeting the following day. Sir Dick requested that we provide him with a briefing that afternoon and Mr. Roosevelt and I met with him at 5 o'clock. Sir Dick had obviously been given the sense of the briefing that had been provided the British in Washington on the previous Friday (Mr. Oldfield, MI-6 representative in Washington had been present at the Friday briefing). We spent an hour with Sir Dick and he was clearly impressed with the evidence and gravely concerned about the implications of the buildup as it reflected upon over-all Soviet intentions. He felt that the Soviet motivation must have been primarily to provide the President with a fait accompli some time in late November at which time Khrushchev hoped to come to some definitive settlement of the Berlin question and probably of the question of foreign bases generally.

12. Mr. Roosevelt, Mr. Graham, and I met with the JIC at 10 o'clock on Tuesday, 23 October. There was no evident skepticism of the validity of our evidence, but it was clear that the Air Ministry was anxious to get the photo taken for analysis by their own PPs (a team of Air Ministry officers was provided an opportunity for closer examination of the photos later in the afternoon). There was, naturally, considerable speculation as to Soviet motives. To the extent that there was any consensus in the JIC, it was very much along the line propounded by Sir Dick the previous evening and recorded above.

13. Following the JIC meeting, I returned to the Embassy and briefed key members of the Embassy staff including the Military Attaches. I then joined Stephenson and White for lunch. At this time they indicated that the Prime Minister had had a Cabinet meeting and that Lord Home would make a major speech that evening (Tuesday) at which time Lord Home would indicate strong support of the UK position and condemnation of the Soviet Union. Much of the discussion at lunch was devoted to Soviet

- 5 -

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

CIA, JPB 84-00499R

BWH/H5/AC 850A,

29 May 72

5 of 11

"Declassified for Publication in  
Foreign Relations of the United States"

reactions to the US action. Both Stephenson and White felt that a blockade of Berlin (or at least a blockade of US access to Berlin) was a likely form of Soviet retaliation. Lunch was a most hasty affair (33 minutes from pink gin to port), and I got the impression that there was to be an emergency JIC meeting that afternoon.

#### Sir Burke Trend

14. On Wednesday evening I met with Sir Burke with whom I spent about an hour. (Sir Burke is presently Second Secretary of Treasury and has among his responsibilities the funding of the British intelligence community. On 1 January 1963, he will replace Sir Norman Brook as Secretary to the Cabinet.) Sir Burke was in Washington during the week of 15 October and had heard the briefing provided for certain members of the British intelligence community on Friday, 19 October.

15. Most of my discussion with Sir Burke was devoted to a description of my activities in London, an updating of his information on Cuba, and a discussion of Soviet motivations. With respect to the latter, Trend agreed wholeheartedly with the theory first advanced by Dick White and subsequently developed in the JIC, that Khrushchev had been hoping to present the President with a fait accompli so as to obtain leverage in discussions with respect to Berlin, bases, and disarmament.

16. Because of Sir Burke's present and future position in EMG, I took great pains to discuss the question of advance warning and consultation. Sir Burke appeared to be convinced that EMG had received as much advance knowledge as was feasible under the circumstances. He expressed satisfaction with the fact that the Agency had sent a representative to London to brief the Prime Minister and the JIC. He also suggested that I return to the UK for an early follow-up session.

#### The Press

17. Because of the adverse or skeptical press reaction to US claims that the USSR had offensive missile bases in Cuba, the Ambassador and the Public Affairs Officer were anxious to have a press briefing as early as possible on Tuesday. At 5:00 p.m., Tuesday, a press conference was held for representatives of all the

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

CM, JPB 84-00499A

BM/HS/AC 850A,

29 May 72

608/1

CM-480

1547/7

dailies, BBC, and ITV. The conference was chaired by Evans, the PAO, and attended by Minister Jones and myself. After indicating the ground rules ( "background", no attribution, etc.), Mr. Evans briefly described the situation in Cuba and indicated that I, a Department of Defence consultant, would show the photographs and explain some of the background of the buildup. I did this, guided by the instructions I had received from Washington. The questions which followed were friendly and I had the feeling after the conference was over (it lasted about an hour) that the press representatives were genuinely convinced of the US case. I released the photographs, without the identification of their precise locations, to the press. (A fuller description of the circumstances of the release of the photographs is attached at Annex.)

18. Later Tuesday evening both the BBC and ITV had major programs dealing with the Cuban crisis. The BBC broadcast the Foreign Minister's speech and documented his remarks by the use of the photographs which I had supplied to the BBC.

*Cfe*  
CHESLER L. COOPER

- 7 -

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

CIA, JCS 84-00499R  
B4/H5/HC 850A,  
29 May 72

7811

CH-481

"Declassified for Publication in  
Foreign Relations of the United States"